



Strand Theatre

Dear Strand Community Member:

My name is Ken Novack and I am the chairman of the Mayor's Task Force on the Future of the Strand Theatre. As you know, the Strand Theatre is a vital institution for Upham's Corner, Dorchester, and all of Boston. Mayor Menino wants the Strand to be a healthy, strong institution for many years. At the end of March, he appointed our Task Force to facilitate a process to help him create a vision for what the Strand can be well into the future. That process includes seeking input from community stakeholders and looking at best practices in theater management around the country.

A central part of creating that vision is hearing from members of the Strand community—neighborhood residents who attend shows, youth who want to act or work in theater-related jobs, performers and producers who bring their work to the Strand stage, local businesses that benefit from activity at the Strand, non-profit organizations that partner with the Strand to provide programming for the community, and many others.

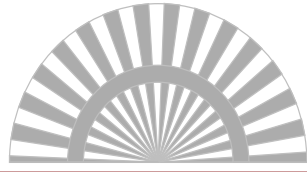
In order to receive broad community input in a thoughtful and constructive manner, the Task Force has engaged a consultant, Marsha M. Morris, who has experience running meaningful community processes. Marsha and members of the Task Force have already started conducting interviews and focus groups with some of the many people interested in the Strand. The Task Force will also be holding an open, public meeting where all are welcome. That meeting will take place on Tuesday, June 1 at 6:30 p.m. at the New Boston Pilot Middle School located at 270 Columbia Road in Upham's Corner. Please come and invite friends and colleagues who are interested in helping shape a new vision for the Strand.

Attached to this email is a brief Fact Sheet that will provide you with some basic information about the Strand, the Task Force, and the City's process of managing the theater.

I hope you can join us on June 1. If, however, you are unable to make it and would like to submit ideas or suggestions for the Strand, feel free to forward them to me at Strand@cityofboston.gov.

Best,

Ken Novack



Strand Theatre Fact Sheet

A special task force, appointed by Mayor Thomas M. Menino in March, is working to assist the City of Boston in creating a new vision for the historic Strand Theatre in Upham's Corner, Dorchester. Charged with developing a new management, programming, and marketing plan for the preservation and improvement of the theater, the task force will advise the Department of Neighborhood Development and other city departments in the drafting of a request for proposals (RFP) consistent with this new vision to attract the most qualified organization to run the Strand Theatre

Timeline

In order to fulfill its charge, the task force began work in late March and will continue meeting through June. The task force will summarize its work by providing the Mayor with recommendations by the end of June.

Process

The task force is consulting with community residents, arts leaders, elected officials, and other interested people to get their input about the vision for the Strand. It is vital that the task force hears from the entire Strand community to ensure all points of view are considered. Included in the outreach will be a public meeting near Upham's Corner, at the New Boston Pilot Middle School at 270 Columbia Road, on June 1 at 6:30 p.m. We encourage all who are interested to attend.

The Task Force Members

The task force is comprised of eight members representing the many constituencies of the Strand Theatre, including the immediate community, the arts, and the city. The task force members include:

- Kenneth J. Novack, Chair (former Vice Chairman, Time Warner, Inc.)
- Ed Dugger (President, UNC Partners)
- Denise Gonsalves (Executive Director, Cape Verdean Community Task Force and Upham's Corner resident)
- Geri Guardino (Executive Director, First Night Celebration)
- Jose Mateo (Director, Ballet Theatre of Boston)
- Magnolia Monroe-Gordon (Boston Public School teacher and Upham's Corner resident)
- Klare Shaw (Senior Associate, Barr Foundation)
- Tyra Sidberry (Director, The Diversity Initiative)

Contact Information

If you have questions about the task force or the future of the Strand Theatre, please send an email to strand@cityofboston.gov.

History of the Strand Theatre

- November 11, 1918: The Strand opened as a movie and vaudeville palace.
- 1930s: The Strand introduces “talkies” to audiences with a screening of Marx Brothers.
- 1938-1958: The Strand continues to run first-run films.
- 1958-1969: The Strand begins to show second-run films until it closes its doors due to declining ticket sales.
- 1970s: Led by Dorchester resident, Thomas McKenna, a group of neighborhood residents create a plan to salvage the theater. They incorporate as the M. Harriet McCormack Center for the Arts to refurbish and reopen the Strand.
- 1979: With the support of the City of Boston, the federal Economic Development Administration, and Community Development Block Grant money, the Strand is renovated and the M. Harriet McCormack Center for the Arts signs a 25-year lease of the theater with the City of Boston for a dollar a year.
- 1991: The theater lights a new marquee with a gala reception.
- 2004: Mayor Thomas M. Menino appoints a task force to help him set a new vision for the Strand Theatre.

Past Programming

In the past, programming at the Strand Theatre has included major events and performances by nationally and internationally recognized artists, community meetings, performing arts workshops for children and teens, church services, health fairs, graduations and award ceremonies, performances by neighborhood youths and local artists.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: When does the lease with the M. Harriet McCormack Center expire?

Answer: June 30, 2004

Question: Why is the City requesting proposals to identify management for the Strand Theatre?

Answer: According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30B, the city must issue a request for proposals (RFP) when leasing or disposing of property.

Question: When will the RFP process be completed?

Answer: The City’s Department of Neighborhood Development plans to release the RFP this summer. The RFP process can take four months or more to complete.

Question: Can the M. Harriet McCormack Center for the Arts respond to the RFP?

Answer: Yes. Anyone can respond to a publicly advertised RFP. Organizations that submit proposals will be required to meet minimum requirements as well as be competitive with other proposals.

Question: Who will manage the Strand in the interim after June 30?

Answer: The City will arrange for interim management of the theater.

Question: Who is responsible for the physical upkeep of the Strand?

Answer: The City of Boston is responsible for capital improvements at the Strand (generally defined as improvements with a lifespan of 20 years or more) and the leaseholder is responsible for day-to-day maintenance, general upkeep, repairs, and cleaning.

Question: What capital support has the City provided to the Strand in the past and what are the future plans?

Answer: The City has spent \$2.3 million on capital improvements at the Strand since 1995. There is an existing authorization for \$1.4 million for the future and Mayor Menino has included an additional \$1.1 million in the City’s capital plan. The City also provides operating funds that support utilities.

Question: Will the DNC delegate event be held at the Strand in July?

Answer: Yes. Boston 2004, the host committee for the DNC, intends to hold the DNC event at the Strand.



Strand Theatre

The City of Boston owns the Strand Theatre and leases it to an organization whose role it is to manage the theater. The City is responsible for the capital improvements while the management organization is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance, cleaning, and general up-keep. In addition to supporting the capital improvements, the City also gives a grant to the management company to cover the cost of utilities. The relationship between the City of Boston and the Strand Theatre is unique—the Strand is the only theater in Boston for which the City provides full funding for capital improvements and annual funds to assist with operating costs.

Below is an outline of the capital improvements the City has undertaken from 1995 to the present, the future capital plans, and a list of projects for which the City is currently receiving estimates.

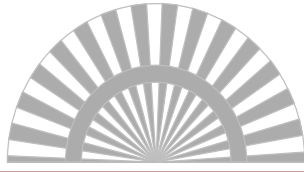
1995—2004: \$2.3 million

- Replacing the roof, flashing, windows and security screens
- Heating system repairs
- Asbestos removal
- Installation of handicap ramp
- HVAC upgrade
- Replacing air conditioning
- Waterproofing driveway wall
- Removing and re-painting sign
- Pointing masonry
- Replacing dressing room roof
- Patching high roof
- Fire alarm system upgrades
- Repair of emergency exit lights
- Parapet repair at lower rook
- Repair of HVAC supply duct
- Upgrade of electrical service

Future Capital Plans: \$2.5 million (\$1.4 approved and \$1.1 additional request)

- Paint peeling interior and upgrade electrical system, stage and exterior lighting
- Upgrade security system and restore portico
- Replace fire doors
- Masonry repairs
- Door and window replacement
- Flooring
- Miscellaneous refurbishing of seats
- Sprinkler system work
- Boiler replacement
- Exit lights

The City is also doing a complete evaluation of renovation needs at the Strand including exterior, architectural, and performance-related issues.



Strand Theatre Benchmark Sheet

A special task force, appointed by Mayor Thomas M. Menino in March, is working to assist the City in developing a new vision for the historic Strand Theatre in Upham's Corner, Dorchester. To help inform their thinking about what is possible in a theater like the Strand, they are contacting theaters around the country that are similar to the Strand in seating range, location outside the central business district, and status as a restored theater. Below is a list of theaters they are studying:

BAM Harvey Theater, New York, NY

A converted vaudeville house bought from the City of New York and converted by the Brooklyn Academy of Music into an 875-seat theater, which they left in a semi-run-down condition for atmosphere. This is a flexible space, which can accommodate a range of events including movie, dance, and major productions.

Columbia Theater for the Performing Arts, Hammond, LA

Located in Hammond Louisiana, this 844-seat theater is fully restored and offers 65 live performances each year. It is available for rental and presents works of ballet, classical music, musicals, and much more.

Dallas Black Dance Theater, TX

Founded in 1976, the DBDT is a modern, jazz, African and spiritual dance company currently in the midst of \$10M capital campaign to acquire the historic Moorland YMCA in the Dallas Arts District. The new space will allow for more performances and expanded teaching facilities.

Edward C. Smith Civic Center of Lexington, NC

All live performances of resident and touring companies as well as rentals. This theater is city-owned and operated by a non-profit. With 102 performances each year, the theater rents, presents, produces, and hosts resident companies.

Forrest Theater, Philadelphia, PA

A legitimate Broadway house built in 1927 and fully restored in 1977 with a rebuild of the lobby in 1999. This theater is interesting because it does Broadway, but isn't the big Broadway House on Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts.

Paramount Theatre of Oakland, CA

Home of the Oakland Symphony and Ballet, this 1930's "movie palace" was given a full, authentic restoration in 1972 and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Programming includes symphony, soul, stand-up comedy, ballet, blues, and Broadway shows.

Shaftman Performance Hall, Roanoke, VA

Fully restored and reopened in May 2001. Owned and operated by the non-profit which saved it. It presents live performances, resident companies, and offers rentals.

Springer Opera House, Columbus, GA

Built in 1871, the Springer Opera House has been renovated twice, once in 1965 and again in 1989. The Springer has a regularly running program of major plays as well as operating the Springer Training Academy for Actors.